

Message Text

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14
ACTION EUR-12

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R 012159Z DEC 76
FM AMCONSUL MONTREAL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8329
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMCONSUL QUEBEC

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, CA
SUBJ: DALE THOMSON SAYS PQ GOVERNMENT THREATENS CANADA

1. DALE THOMSON, NOTED CANADIAN HISTORIAN AND POLITICAL THINKER, SAID IN SPEECH LAST NIGHT THAT IT IS "DANGEROUS NONSENSE" TO BELIEVE PQ GOQ WILL "FORGET ABOUT" INDEPENDENCE NOW THAT IT IS IN POWER, DESPITE ITS DOWNPLAY OF ISSUE DURING ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN. SPEECH INCLUDED COMMENT THAT "DEMOCRATIZATION" OF QUEBEC "HAPPENS TO THREATEN THE VERY EXISTENCE OF CANADA."

2. HE ALSO RAISED DOUBTS THAT NON-FRENCH QUEBECKERS WILL BE TREATED FAIRLY IN AN INDEPENDENT QUEBEC. "AS FOR THE REST OF US - ANGLOS, NEOS, ALLOPHONES, ALLOGENES OR "OTHERIANS" - NOTHING PREMIER LEVESQUE AND OTHERS HAVE SAID HAS PERSUADED ME THAT WE WOULD RECEIVE FAIR AND EQUAL TREATMENT. WE WOULD BE 'FULL CITIZENS' BUT UNDER A REGIME THAT WOULD IMPOSE ON US THE LANGUAGE AND VALUES OF THE FRANCOPHONE MAJORITY. HE (LEVESQUE) HAS STATED CLEARLY THAT OUR EVENTUAL FUTURE WOULD BE TOTAL ASSIMILATION". (COMMENT: THOMSON IS FLUENT IN FRENCH.)

3. IN RESPONSE TO OUR ENQUIRY (THOMSON IS GOOD FRIEND) WHETHER PRESS HAD EXAGGERATED HIS PESSIMISM BY WHAT IT OMITTED FROM
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SPEECH, HE SAID IT HAD - BUT ADDED THAT HE IS SERIOUSLY

DISTURBED. HE FEELS THAT GOQ WILL PURSUE SEPARATISM AND THAT TOO MANY HAVE SIMPLY NOT FACED THIS FACT; "THERE ARE TOO MANY WHO FEEL THAT LEVESQUE REALLY JUST WANTS TO GOVERN AND THAT HE WILL BE GLAD TO HAVE A REFERENDUM JUST TO PUT THE ISSUE BEHIND HIM AND GET ON WITH THE REAL JOB. THIS IS DANGEROUS NONSENSE." HE ADDED THAT "TRUDEAU IS NOT GEARED UP FOR THIS CHALLENGE." HE NOTED THAT SPEECH ALSO LAID GREAT EMPHASIS ON NEED FOR MAKING FRENCH-CANADIANS FEEL THEY HAD MORE TO GAIN BY REMAINING IN CANADA THEN IN INDEPENDENCE AND THAT THIS IS THE JOB OF ALL NON-FRENCH CANADIANS.

4. THOMSON HAS, IN OUR EXPERIENCE, ALWAYS BEEN A REALIST IN HIS ASSESSMENTS, IN AN APPARENTLY BALANCED FASHION. WE HAVE NOT BEFORE KNOWN HIM TO BE SO PESSIMISTIC AS IN THIS CONVERSATION. HARPER

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